

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 /019 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7948

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 1586

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

LIMDIS

FOR AF-HARROP FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, ET, US
SUBJ: NEW AMERICAN AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 082117

1. FOR TIME BEING, I SUBSCRIBE TO SUGGESTION THAT WE TAKE NO FRESH INITIATIVE WITH PMGSE. WE SUBMITTED ORIGINAL REQUEST FOR AGREEMENT JUST PRIOR TO PROPOSING AARON VISIT. TIMING, IF NOT ACTION ITSELF, WAS CLEARLY INTENDED AS GESTURE OF SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH US VIEWS ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ETHIOPIA, PARTICULARLY COMING AS IT DID SO SPORTLY AFTER RESIGNATION OF ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR AYALEW AND AMIDST OUTRAGEOUS MENGISTU ACCUSATIONS AGAINST US. ON THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS SINCE THEN, ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US THAT GRANTING OF AGREEMENT WOULD COME WITHIN FEW DAYS (FONMIN FELLEKE TO AARON AND YOU FEB 18, BERHANE BERESSE TO ME MARCH 9, AND MOFA PERMSEC DAWIT TO ME MARCH 13). SINCE THEN, I RAISED ISSUE WITH BERHANE DERESSE MARCH 25, AND HE WITH ME MARCH 29. BERHANE ALSO OFFERED TO ARRANGE MEETING WITH FONMIN FELLEKE "TO MAKE HIM AWARE OF AMERICAN PRESSURES THAT ARE GROWING."

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2. THUS, THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION THAT PMGSE IS UNAWARE THAT DELAY IN GRANTING AGREEMENT HAS GREATER SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE WITHIN CONTEXT OF UPS AND DOWNS OF OUR RELATIONS SINCE AMBASSADOR HUMMEL LEFT THAN IT WOULD UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN OTHER COUNTRIES. THIS BECOMES PARTICULARLY SO AS RUMORS OF THAT DELAY AND SPECULATION AS TO SIGNIFICANCE THEREOF BE-

COME GROWING TOPIC OF DISCUSSION ON DIPLOMATIC CIRCUIT HERE. AS YOU SUGGEST, MENGISTU'S ABSENCE MAY BE ONE REASON FOR CONTINUED DELAY. ANOTHER MAY BE, AS FELLEKE HINTED TO AARON FEB 18, SOME ETHIOPIAN PIQUE OVER FACT THAT FELLEKE GOT IMPRESSION FROM SECY VANCE IN NEW YORK IN OCTOBER THAT OUR NOMINATION OF AMBASSADOR WAS ALREADY IMMINENT THEN.

3. ON BALANCE, THEREFORE, I WOULD RECOMMEND WAITING UNTIL PROMISED MEETING WITH FELLEKE EITHER COMES TO PASS OR DIES ON VINE, OR EVEN BETTER WE ARE NOTIFIED IN ROUTINE MATTER THAT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN GRANTED. AFTER ALL, PMGSE WILL BE DOING US NO SPECIAL FAVOR BY GRANTING AGREEMENT, WHICH IS PART OF BUSINESS OF NORMAL DIPLOMATIC INTERCOURSE. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ANY OBJECTION TO NOMINEE PER SE'; HENCE, DELAY IS EITHER ATTRIBUTABLE TO BUREAUCRATIC INERTIA OR A CALCULATED ACTION TO PROVE SOMETHING TO US OR TO SOVIETS.

4. THIS BRINGS ME BACK TO WHERE WE STAND ON ETHIOPIA. WHEN YOU REFER IN PARA 3 OF REFTTEL TO "NEW DIRECTION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP," I ASSUME YOU HAVE IN MIND FACT THAT US PRESSED SOMALIA VERY HARD FOR COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL FROM OGADEN AND IS CONTINUING TO PRESS FOR PUBLIC GSDR COMMITMENTS NOT TO DISHONOR ETHIOPIAN, KENYAN, AND DJIBOUTI BORDERS. THESE ARE UNQUESTIONABLY PRO-ETHIOPIAN ACTIONS ON OUR PART. BUT WE WOULD BE MISTAKEN TO CONCLUDE THAT THESE OR ANY OTHER ACTIONS US
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IS LIKELY TO TAKE IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE ARE LIKELY TO HAVE AN APPRECIABLE AFFECT UPON ETHIOPIA'S ACTIONS OR ATTITUDE TOWARDS US.

5. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT AARON VISIT CLEARED AWAY A LOT OF BAD AIR. BUT NOTHING FUNDAMENTAL CHANGED AS RESULT, AND CERTAINLY NO NEW DIRECTIONS EMERGED. ETHIOPIANS TEND TO JUDGE ALL OTHER COUNTRIES IN TERMS OF WHAT THEY CAN EXPECT TO GET FROM THEM. IN CASE OF US, THEY EXPECT LITTLE OF BENEFIT AND MUCH POTENTIAL TROUBLE. THEY SEE US MOVING QUICKLY TO BOLSTER SIAD BARRE GOVERNMENT AND TO PREVENT SOMALIA FROM REVERSION TO PRO-SOVIET POLICY. IN ETHIOPIAN VIEW, THIS ALMOST CERTAINLY PRESAGES A US-SOMALI ARMS RELATIONSHIP AND NEW THREATS TO STABILITY IN OGADEN AND DJIBOUTI. IT ALSO RENDERS LESS LIKELY CHANCES OF PRESSING SOMALIA TO MAKE KIND OF ASSURANCES VIS-A-VIS ITS NEIGHBORS WHICH ETHIOPIANS CONSIDER THEIR DUE AFTER WINNING WAR.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 1586

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6. PMGSE ALSO KNOWS THAT US WILL AGITATE FOREVER IF NECESSARY TO BRING ABOUT WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET, CUBAN, AND OTHER FOREIGN MILITARY PERSONNEL FROM ETHIOPIA. DESPITE OCCASIONAL AND CRYPTIC ASSURANCES WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM MENGISTU AND OFFICIAL SOURCES HERE THAT SOVIETS ET AL ARE ONLY HERE AS LONG AS THEY ARE NEEDED, WE JUST DON'T BELIEVE IT. SINCE BEGINNING OF SOVIET/CUBAN INFLUX LAST SUMMER, THEIR PRESENCE, ACTIONS, AND MATERIAL HAVE SERVED PURPOSE OF ACCELERATING MILITARY VICTORY IN OGADEN, FOR WHICH THEY WERE PROBABLY INDISPENSABLE. BY DOING SO, THEY ALSO CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO SHORING UP A FALTERING REGIME WITH MANY ENEMIES.

7. IT IS TRUE THAT PMGSE IS MUCH STRONGER THAN IT WAS LAST SUMMER. IT HAS WON COSTLY WAR, ACQUIRED VAST MILITARY ARSENAL, DECIMATED RANKS OF ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (EPRP), AND ACQUIRED IMPORTANT ALLIES. BUT THE KILLING OF OPPOSITION ELEMENTS PROCEEDS ALMOST UNABATED; THE INFIGHTING WITHIN NOMINALLY PRO-GOVERNMENT ELEMENTS PROCEEDS APACE; THERE IS HARDLY AN ETHIOPIAN FAMILY THAT HAS NOT BEEN AFFECTED BY DEATH OR ARREST OF RELATIVES; SOME LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR PERSUING WAR IN ERITREA STILL EXISTS, EVEN THOUGH MANPOWER AND MATERIAL HAVE REACHED OVERWHELMING PROPORTIONS. WITH THESE CONCERNS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO BE REAL IN THE FORESEE-
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ABLE FUTURE, PMGSE SURELY VIEWS SOVBLOC PRESENCE AS ONE MORE GUARANTEE OF ITS OWN ABILITY TO PROMOTE NATIONAL STABILITY ON ITS OWN TERMS. ALREADY, NEW MILITARY EXCUSES (SOMALI FAILURE TO SATISFY ETHIOPIAN CONDITIONS FOR PEACEFUL SOLUTION IN

OGADEN, ALLEGED SOMALI THREATS TO DJIBOUTI, NATO NAVAL MAN-EUVERS, ETC.) ARE CONSTANTLY BEING CREATED TO KEEP SOVIETS AND CUBANS IN COUNTRY.

8. EVEN THE ONE POSITIVE THING US HAS TO OFFER--DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE--IS NOT MUCH OF A POLICY ASSET. SINCE REVOLUTION, ETHIOPIANS HAVE SHOWN NOTABLE RELUCTANCE TO SIGN UP FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT AID FROM US, AND PAST INERTIA IN THIS FIELD HAS BEEN IMMEASURABLY COMPOUNDED BY CURRENT INFLUENCE OF PRO-SOVIET ETHIOPIAN LEADERS, FOR WHOM ANYTHING THAT MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS A FRIENDLY US ACTION IS ANATHEMA. MOREOVER, IF, AS STATE 085785 INDICATES, OUR ENTIRE AID PROGRAM IS NOW TO COME TO ABRUPT HALT BECAUSE OF LACK OF ETHIOPIAN PROGRESS ON COMPENSATION ISSUE, THIS WOULD LEAVE US IN POSITION ONLY TO DO ETHIOPIA HARM THROUGH ITS POLICY MEASURES TOWARDS OTHER COUNTRIES, WITH LITTLE OR NO ABILITY POSITIVELY TO INFLUENCE PMGSE BY ANY MEASURES WE CAN TAKE HERE OR IN WASHINGTON ON STRICTLY BILATERAL BASIS. RENEWED ARM-TWISTING ON HUMAN RIGHTS, THOUGH UNDOUBTEDLY CORRECT FROM VANTAGE OF OUR WORLDWIDE HUMAN RIGHTS OBJECTIVES, IS NOT GOING TO MAKE ONE IOTA OF DIFFERENCE IN ETHIOPIA AND WILL CERTAINLY STRENGTHEN THOSE WHO BELIEVE REGIME SHOULD NOT ACCEPT AID FROM IMPERIALIST US.

9. THIS IS RATHER BLEAK PICTURE FOR A NEW AMBASSADOR OBVIOUSLY COMING TO ADDIS WITH MISSION OF RESTORING SOME BALANCE TO OUR RELATIONS AND CONTRIBUTING TO GREATER US GOALS IN HORN OF AFRICA REGION. LOOKING BACK OVER 77 ADDIS ABABA 6976, WRITTEN AFTER TSONGAS/BONKER VISIT, HOWEVER, WE SEE
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LITTLE THAT HAS CHANGED SINCE OUR ANALYSIS AT THAT TIME, CERTAINLY NOTHING FOR BETTER EXCEPT THAT WAR IS OVER.

10. IF AND WHEN I SEE FELLEKE, I SHALL CERTAINLY USE TALKING POINTS PARA 3 REFTEL. TONE OF LAST TALKING POINT, HOWEVER, IMPLIES THAT PMGSE WOULD BE DOING US AND ITSELF A FAVOR BY GRANTING AGREEMENT. FAR FROM PROVIDING NEW EVIDENCE OF ITS NONALIGNED STATUS, GRANTING AGREEMENT FOR AN AMBASSADOR IS WHAT GOVERNMENTS NATURALLY DO IN NORMAL COURSE OF THINGS. FAILURE TO DO SO, ON OTHER HAND, IS SUCH AN UNUSUAL ACTION THAT IT CAN ONLY BE INTERPRETED AS SIGNAL OF BASIC DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES, JUST AS DEMONSTRATIVE WITHDRAWAL OF AMBASSADOR WOULD BE.

11. ETHIOPIANS KNOW WE ARE WATCHING CAREFULLY THEIR REACTION ON AGREEMENT REQUEST. IF, NOTWITHSTANDING, THEY LEAVE US WAITING ANOTHER MONTH, THAT IS CLEAREST SIGNAL WE COULD EVER WISH THAT THEIR RATHER WEAK PROFESSIONS OF WANTING TO MAINTAIN DIALOGUE ARE ENTIRELY IDLE. SIGNAL WOULD BE EVEN MORE

UNFAVORABLE IF THEY MEANWHILE GRANT AGREEMENT TO NEW FRENCH
AMBASSADOR (REQUEST PUT IN FEB 23) WITHOUT GRANTING IT TO
US NOMINEE. WE SHOULD THEN HAVE A VERY SERIOUS LOOK AT OUR
ENTIRE POSTURE HERE.
MATHERON

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